

What is Claimed is:

1. A method for obtaining predicted user satisfaction data regarding the performance of a search mechanism which provides search results in response to user queries, comprising:
storing at least one predictive pattern for predicting user satisfaction with said provided search results from data regarding user behavior in response to a query; and
applying said predictive pattern to at least one element of context-based user behavior data, said elements of context-based user behavior data comprising a performed query; provided search results; and user behavior data.
2. The method of claim 1, where said storing at least one predictive pattern comprises utilizing data mining techniques to determine at least one predictive pattern for user satisfaction.
3. The method of claim 1, where said user behavior data comprises explicit user feedback data collected from said user contemporaneously with said performed query.
4. The method of claim 1, where said user behavior data comprises implicit user feedback data.
5. The method of claim 4, where said user behavior data is selected from the group comprising: user navigation to a new page using a hyperlink; user navigation to a new page using a history list; user navigation to a new page using an address bar; user navigation to a new page using a favorites list; user scrolling behavior; user document printing behavior; user adding a document to said favorites list; user switching focus to a different application; user switching focus back from a different application; user closing a window; user dwell time behavior; user initiation of a new query; sequences of user behaviors; and user inactivity without switching focus from a window relating to said performed query.
6. The method of claim 1, where said application of said predictive pattern yields predicted user satisfaction data regarding said search mechanism, and where said method further comprises:
displaying said predicted user satisfaction data.
7. The method of claim 1, where said application of said predictive pattern further comprises isolating a set of said performed queries which are unsatisfactory and which share a common characteristic.

8. The method of claim 1, where said context-based user behavior data comprises a testing set of context-based user behavior data.
9. At least one of an operating system, a computer readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of computer-executable instructions, a co-processing device, a computing device, and a modulated data signal carrying computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.
10. A system for obtaining predicted user satisfaction data regarding the performance of a search mechanism which provides search results in response to user queries, comprising:
 - storage for storing at least one predictive pattern for predicting user satisfaction with a said provided search results from data regarding user behavior in response to a query; and
 - data mining apparatus for applying said predictive pattern to at least one element of context-based user behavior data, said elements of context-based user behavior data comprising a performed query; provided search results; and user behavior data.
11. The system of claim 10, where said predictive pattern is derived from the use of data mining techniques to determine at least one predictive pattern for user satisfaction.
12. The system of claim 10, where said user behavior data comprises explicit user feedback data collected from said user contemporaneously with said performed query.
13. The system of claim 10, where said user behavior data comprises implicit user feedback data.
14. The system of claim 13, where said user behavior data is selected from the group comprising: user navigation to a new page using a hyperlink; user navigation to a new page using a history list; user navigation to a new page using an address bar; user navigation to a new page using a favorites list; user scrolling behavior; user document printing behavior; user adding a document to said favorites list; user switching focus to a different application; user switching focus back from a different application; user closing a window; user dwell time behavior; user initiating a new query; sequences of user behaviors; and user inactivity without switching focus from a window relating to said performed query.

15. The system of claim 10, where said data mining apparatus produces predicted user satisfaction data regarding said search mechanism, and where said method further comprises:
displaying said predicted user satisfaction data.
16. The system of claim 10, where said data mining apparatus further isolates a set of said performed queries which are unsatisfactory and which share a common characteristic.
17. The system of claim 10, where said context-based user behavior data comprises a testing set of context-based user behavior data.
18. A method for real-time optimization of a search mechanism which provides search results in response to user queries, comprising:
storing at least one predictive pattern for predicting user satisfaction with a said provided search results from data regarding user behavior in response to a query;
applying said predictive pattern to at least one element of context-based user behavior data, said elements of context-based user behavior data comprising a performed query; provided search results; and user behavior data;
modifying said search mechanism based on the result of said application of said predictive pattern.
19. The method of claim 18, where said modification of said search mechanism comprises modifying said search mechanism so said search results for a given query are presented in a different order.
20. The method of claim 18, where said context-based user behavior data comprises a pre-judged set of user behavior data.
21. At least one of an operating system, a computer readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of computer-executable instructions, a co-processing device, a computing device, and a modulated data signal carrying computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 18.
22. A system for real-time optimization of a search mechanism which provides search results in response to user queries, comprising:
storage for storing at least one predictive pattern for predicting user satisfaction with said

provided search results from data regarding user behavior in response to a query;

data mining apparatus for applying said predictive pattern to at least one element of context-based user behavior data, said elements of context-based user behavior data comprising a performed query; provided search results; and user behavior data; and

dynamic search mechanism modifier for modifying search mechanism based on the result of said application of said predictive pattern.

23. The system of claim 22, where said dynamic search mechanism modifier modifies said search mechanism so said search results for a given query are presented in a different order.

24. The system of claim 22, where said context-based user behavior data comprises a pre-judged set of user behavior data.

25. A system for real-time optimization of a search mechanism which provides search results in response to user queries, comprising:

means for storing at least one predictive pattern for predicting user satisfaction with said provided search results from data regarding user behavior in response to a query; and

means for applying said predictive pattern to at least one element of context-based user behavior data, said elements of context-based user behavior data comprising a performed query; provided search results; and user behavior data.

26. The system of claim 25, further comprising:

means for modifying said search mechanism based on the result of said application of said predictive pattern.